

FISH and WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: December 10, 2018

Agenda Item: Proposed elk shoulder seasons for 2019 in HDs 411, 511, 530, 540 & 580

Division: Wildlife

Action Needed: Proposed

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 40 Minutes

Background: FWP proposes to change season types and licenses in hunting districts 411, 511, 530, 540, and 580, all which have performance-based shoulder seasons that have failed to meet harvest criteria after two years and are unlikely to meet those criteria in a third year, and to make the 004-00 and 005-00 B licenses over-the-counter instead of limited draw. The purpose is to increase harvest of elk, especially antlerless elk, by focusing more antlerless harvest during the general firearms season by changing these HDs to antlerless-only harvest during the last three weeks of the general season and by increasing availability of B licenses. In general, this proposal:

- Maintains current shoulder seasons because of the substantial antlerless harvest that occurs. In the last two years 32 percent of adult cow harvest totaling 590 cows in these five HDs was during shoulder seasons.
- Maintains the current archery season.
- Changes the general rifle season to first two weeks either-sex or spike/antlerless as the case may be and the last three weeks to antlerless-only.
- Converts the limited-draw regional 004-00 and 005-00 B licenses to over-the-counter to allow additional opportunity if/when hunters desire.
- Retains special either-sex opportunity permits such as the 900-20, 411-20, 580-21, and 580-22 through the entire archery and general seasons.

Shoulder seasons were instituted in these five HDs and 38 others in 2016 and were originally meant to be evaluated against specific harvest criteria with three years of harvest data. However, it is clear the five HDs identified here will not meet them even with an additional year of harvest. The five HDs proposed for change were chosen from among the 43 HDs with shoulder seasons because they are the most egregiously over-objective and fell short by 400 or more of the needed adult cow harvest for 2016 and 2017 combined.

This proposal comes outside of the regular biennial cycle and is necessitated by FWP's and the commission's interest in managing elk to population objective. These proposed changes are further explained in the justification in the commission packet for the December meeting.

Public Involvement Process & Results: In addition to public comment on proposed elk season changes taken during the Dec. 10 commission meeting, public comment will run through 5 p.m., Jan. 18, 2019, and any final adoptions will take place at the February 2019 commission meeting.

Alternatives and Analysis: Proposals may be adopted as proposed, with adjustment, with additions, with deletions, or no change from 2018 (status quo). No change would challenge the supporting justifications behind proposals.

Agency Recommendation & Rationale: Rationale for this proposal is included in the commission information packets and may be further articulated at the Dec. 10 commission meeting.

Proposed Motion:

I move the commission adopt for public comment the proposed 2019 elk performance-based shoulder seasons in HDs 411, 511, 530, 540, and 580 and make the 004-00 and 005-00 B licenses over-the-counter as presented by FWP, and that all other aspects of the elk season remain unchanged.